

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I have been most impressed by the quality of remarks that have been talked about here this afternoon, most impressed about the sincerity of the remarks that have been made here this afternoon. I believe that it demonstrates the quality that Frank O'Bannon had and that he transcended politics. Both Republicans and Democrats admired him and respected him and loved him. They may have had differences, but never lost the respect.

I have known Frank O'Bannon for over 20 years. He was one of the first people that I ever became acquainted with in politics. His home, where his wife and his children were raised, is in Corydon, Indiana, a town that is in the 9th District, in my district. I have been to his house, stayed all night with him, loved him and admired him and respected him, and we miss him in Indiana. For the last week we have mourned our great Governor, but in the next couple of days we are going to celebrate the life of Frank O'Bannon and the many accomplishments that he had.

Probably the greatest accomplishment in his life was the fact that one could be a nice guy and get elected to the highest office in Indiana. Good guys can finish first, and Frank is a perfect example of that.

I wish many people and Members of Congress could have witnessed the class that the First Lady of Indiana demonstrated to the people of Indiana and to this Nation. She really held her strength and demonstrated that, while she could mourn, she could remain strong for the people that she loved in Indiana.

We are going to miss Frank O'Bannon, but I am convinced of one thing: He has a one-way ticket to heaven, and I hope to join him there someday.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. Therefore, I urge swift passage of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just end by saying that in the 1997 inauguration speech, Frank O'Bannon made some very poignant remarks that I think are appropriate at this time. He said: "Life is no brief candle for me. It is sort of a splendid torch which I got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as I can before turning it over to future generations." Frank O'Bannon did just that, and we all miss him, and we wish his family the very best, and they are in our prayers.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today, we pay tribute to Governor Frank O'Bannon—a statesman, loving husband and father and a friend to many.

A loyal servant of Indiana for over 30 years, Frank O'Bannon lived life as a country gen-

tleman, with an unassuming strength to hold to his convictions to lead a State but more important, a deep and endless devotion to family.

The life of Frank O'Bannon is one to look at with inspiration and thanks. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Judy, their three children—Jonathan, Jennifer and Polly and their 5 grandchildren.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 369.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 369, the resolution just agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

HONORING THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 368) honoring the Small Business Administration on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 368

Whereas the Nation's economy is built on and draws its strength from the creativity and entrepreneurship of its people;

Whereas the Nation's 25 million small businesses employ more than half of all private sector employees, pay 44.5 percent of the total United States private payroll, and generate 60 to 80 percent of all net new jobs annually;

Whereas the men and women who own and operate the Nation's small businesses make a vital contribution to the Nation's prosperity through their ongoing work to create new technologies, products, and services;

Whereas small businesses produce 13 to 14 times more patents per employee than large patenting firms, and these patents are twice as likely as large firm patents to be among the 1 percent most cited;

Whereas the Small Business Administration was officially established in 1953 and for the past 50 years has played a vital role in ensuring that the door to the American Dream is truly open to all entrepreneurs;

Whereas the mission and high calling of the Small Business Administration is to champion the interests of the Nation's entrepreneurs for the benefit of all Americans;

Whereas the Small Business Administration is marking its 50th anniversary by celebrating the accomplishments of small-business owners across the country throughout the year; and

Whereas the President has designated the week beginning on Monday, September 15, 2003, as "National Small Business Week": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Small Business Week, and the events surrounding the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Small Business Administration;

(2) commends the Administrator and the employees of the Small Business Administration for their work on behalf of the Nation's small businesses; and

(3) reaffirms that the Small Business Administration, through its loan, technical assistance, and entrepreneurial development programs, plays an important role in assisting small businesses to ensure a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

PERMISSION OF MEMBER TO BE ORIGINAL
COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 368

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), the ranking minority member of the committee, be added as an original cosponsor of H. Res. 368.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

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Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as has been the tradition for the past 40 years, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of Small Business Week, which I include for the RECORD today. We are now in the middle of Small Business Week for 2003, which is being sponsored by the Small Business Administration.

The purpose of this week's celebration is to honor over 25 million businesses that make up the U.S. small business community. It is very appropriate for us, today, to recognize the importance of America's small businesses and the significant role played by the Small Business Administration in our Nation's economic growth.

This year is particularly important in recognizing the 50th anniversary of the SBA. President Eisenhower and Congress established the SBA in 1953 to provide financial and management assistance to startup and growing small businesses.

Over the past 50 years, the SBA has helped countless numbers of small businesses survive and succeed in this economy. It maintains a portfolio of guaranteed small business loans and disaster loans totaling more than \$45 billion. The 7(a) program alone accounts for approximately 40 to 50 percent of all long-term capital needs for small businesses. The SBA has also guaranteed another \$13 billion in venture capital investments to small businesses. To complement its successful credit programs, the SBA's management assistance programs were delivered to more than 1 million small businesses during the past year.

Some of the great American companies that are now household names were initially started with assistance from the SBA. Allen-Edmonds Shoe, the Panda Restaurant Group, Winnebago Industries with help from the 7(a) program, Callaway Golf, FedEx, Hewlett Packard, Intel Corporation, Jenny Craig, Outback Steakhouse, Staples, Sun Microsystems and the Gymboree Corporation all started with infusions of capital from the Small Business Investment Company program.

U.S. small businesses are the driving forces behind our economy and are poised to lead this Nation out of its economic doldrums. More than 99 percent of all employers in the U.S. are small businesses, providing between 60 and 80 percent of the net new jobs added to our workforce. In fact, the National Federal of Independent Businesses said that in August hiring intentions among small businesses are at the highest level in a year.

Small businesses have proven, year in and year out, that they are a potent force in the economy, accounting for over 50 percent of the private sector output. And their sights are not just set at home. Leading the way towards a global economy, the small business community represents 96 percent of all U.S. exporters.

Over the past 3 years, I have been the chairman of the Committee on Small Business and the previous 6 years as the subcommittee chairman. I have witnessed the enormous potential of America's small businesses at work. As someone who grew up in a small, family-owned business and who ran his own law firm, I know that small businesses are flexible, creative, give us jobs, provide economic growth, and, most importantly, provide hope in a future for millions of families and communities across our Nation.

The resolution now before the House recognizes the critical role played by small businesses and the Small Business Administration in our economy. It is appropriate that we take a moment from our busy schedule to acknowledge the success of small businesses and to encourage our Federal Government to continue to provide it help to ensure future successes.

I urge each of my colleagues to vote for H. Res. 368 as a way to say thank you to the SBA and the small business

community for its contributions to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the White House proclamation. SMALL BUSINESS WEEK, 2003—BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—A PROCLAMATION

The success of small businesses in America reflects the innovation, determination, and hard work of the American people. During Small Business Week, we celebrate the entrepreneurs and business people who create goods, services, and jobs, and bring opportunity and economic prosperity to communities throughout our country. We also reaffirm our commitment to helping more small business owners and their employees realize the American Dream.

Small businesses create the majority of new jobs in our Nation and account for more than half of the output of our economy. They lead the way in generating new ideas and creating new technologies, goods, and services for our country and for the world.

Small businesses also reflect the diversity of America. Nearly 40 percent of small companies in the United States are owned by women. There are also more than 3 million minority-owned small businesses across the country.

Because small businesses are vital to our Nation's prosperity and reflect the hard work of the American people, my Administration has taken important steps to assist small businesses and the people they employ. We have reduced taxes, encouraged investment, and removed obstacles to growth. The Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 I signed into law will provide 23 million small business owners with tax cuts averaging more than \$2,200 each. The Act also quadrupled the amount that small businesses can expense for new capital investments, encouraging new investment in technology, machinery, and other equipment. This new technology and equipment will increase productivity and create new jobs, thereby contributing to the overall strength of our economy.

We are also seeking to permanently eliminate the death tax. With the repeal of this tax, small business men and women will be able to pass their life's work to the next generation without having to pay a punitive tax that in many cases forces the sale of the business or many of its assets. And I support legislation that would make it easier for small businesses to offer health coverage options to their employees. Through Association Health Plans, small businesses could pool together to offer group plans to all of their employees, like those available to large businesses. In addition, we are working to streamline small business regulations and paperwork. To this end, I issued an Executive Order that requires all Federal regulatory agencies to minimize these burdens on our Nation's small businesses.

The Small Business Administration (SBA), which helps American innovators and risk-takers launch and build their businesses, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. By helping small businesses succeed, the SBA continues to strengthen America.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 14 through September 20, 2003, as Small Business Week. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that celebrate the achievements of small business owners and their employees and encourage and foster the development of new small businesses.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 368, which recognizes the contributions that America's entrepreneurs make across the Nation and within our communities.

Often, people believe that GM, Lockheed Martin and IBM power our economy; but the reality is that small businesses are the driving force. Our country's 23 million small businesses create three out of every four new jobs, represent 99 percent of all employers and provide 70 percent of workers with their important first paycheck. It is because of this we, on the committee, say that small business is big business in America.

Success in small business ownership is one of the unique opportunities of our economy. Yes, in other countries their citizens can own their own businesses, but nowhere to the extent found in America. Americans grow up with the entrepreneurial spirit around us. The reality of owning your own business is not a far-off dream, but an achievable goal. We all know small business success stories, whether they are friends, grandparents, parents, or our sisters and brothers. The opportunity to start a small business is what draws many to our country. No place else in the world can someone with hard work turn an idea into a thriving business.

As these opportunities become more available, the face of small business is changing. Today, minorities are becoming business owners on a scale never seen before. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Latino-owned firms increased by almost 40 percent and African American-owned businesses increased by 25 percent.

Small business ownership has also become a new avenue for empowering women. Whether because of family concerns or because the corporate glass ceiling still exists, women are striking out and starting their own companies at twice the rate of all businesses. This is simply phenomenal.

Make no mistake, it is not easy being a small business owner today. Small businesses are confronting health care premiums rising 14 percent this year alone, Federal regulatory compliance costs are increasing for small businesses, and the Federal Government continues blocking them from benefiting from the \$235 billion Federal procurement market. While it is never easy, small business owners are in desperate need of health care reform, a national energy plan to reduce skyrocketing costs, access to capital, targeted tax relief, and access to government procurement.

Small businesses are a proven tool to guide the Nation out of economic downturns. Small businesses have done it before, and small businesses can do it again. However, their success can only be achieved if we provide them with the help they require.

So, today, as we recognize the hard work and commitment of America's entrepreneurs, it is also important that we recommit ourselves to working to create an economic environment that encourages growth for them. We must strive to make the job of our Nation's small businesses all the much easier. It is at least what we can do, given all they have done for us.

Today, with the adoption of this resolution, in a very small way we thank our Nation's entrepreneurs for the contributions they make every day. They are the catalyst for economic growth, and they are the anchors of our communities.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Small Business, I want to commend the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman MANZULLO) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for their leadership on small business matters.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 40 years, the President has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of Small Business Week. I rise in support of the Small Business Administration's designating the week of September 14 through 20, 2003, as National Small Business Week. This celebration will honor the estimated 25 million small businesses in America who have created three out of every four new jobs and generate more than 55 percent of America's innovations.

Small Business Week recognizes outstanding small business owners for their personal achievements and contributions to our Nation's economy. One outstanding entrepreneur is named to represent each State as the State's Small Business Person of the Year. From this group, the National Small Business Person of the Year is chosen.

Small businesses employ half of our workers and account for half of our gross domestic product. Small businesses have and will continue to pull the U.S. economy out of recession. They anchor our neighborhoods, employ and train our workers, and take care of our families. They are the reason that the United States economy has consistently been known as the strongest in the world.

Today, we honor our small businesses and entrepreneurs for their efforts and what they mean to America.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman MANZULLO) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), for their leadership and urge passage of this resolution.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise as an original cosponsor in strong support of H. Res. 368, introduced by the Committee on Small Business chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

This legislation honors the Small Business Administration on the occasion of its 50th anniversary and designates this week as National Small Business Week.

In 1953, the SBA was created to champion the interests of the Nation's entrepreneurs for the benefit of all Americans. Our Nation's economy is built on and draws its strength from the creativity and entrepreneurship of its people.

Over 25 million small businesses employ more than half of all private sector employees. They pay 44.5 percent of the total United States private payroll. They generate 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs annually. Small businesses are, in fact, the engine of this Nation's economy, as was said earlier by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

I worked with my father in south Texas to build a small business in my district that today employs over 300 people. The SBA played a key role in this company's development by assisting my family in growing this business during the last 54 years. Presently, Ms. Sylvia Zamponi, the district director for the SBA in the Lower Rio Grande Valley District, is providing similar assistance to my constituents. I want to commend her for all her efforts on behalf of the small business owners in my congressional district.

I also want to express my appreciation for all of the efforts of the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman MANZULLO) to support small businesses and to improve their situation, particularly the manufacturing sector in the United States that currently is in a crisis with the dramatic loss of manufacturing jobs.

To help address this crisis, the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman MANZULLO) organized the Congressional Manufacturing Caucus, which I have joined, to preserve manufacturing jobs in America. The caucus will not only educate Washington on the importance of manufacturing in America, but it will work to enact policies to stem job losses and to put people back to work, including in south Texas and throughout the country.

I also commend the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), for taking appropriate actions to ensure that SBA continues to perform effectively the mission Congress gave it over 50 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, again, I congratulate the SBA on its 50th anniversary and hope that the current administration will continue to fully fund SBA so it

may continue to assist entrepreneurs throughout this country.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Mr. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor America's small business community during national Small Business Week and recognize those small businesses on Guam that are the backbone of our island economy.

I would also like to take this time to thank Mr. Kenneth Lujan, the director of Small Business Administration District Office in Hagatna, Guam, for his continued hard work to provide important services to assist small businesses on Guam to grow and thrive. I want to wish Mr. Lujan and the entire SBA office on Guam a happy 50th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of businesses on Guam are small operations. I guess you could call Guam the SBA community of the United States. I am grateful for the continued hard work and the innovation of our island's entrepreneurs, which help grow and enhance the economy on Guam, as well as provide jobs.

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In particular, I want to congratulate Mr. John Shen for being selected as the Small Businessman of the Year on Guam. Mr. Shen is the owner of Shen's Corporation, which operates Prestige Automobiles on Guam. Mr. Shen was born in Taiwan, but immigrated to Guam in 1979. Mr. Shen and his wife started several small business operations before the opportunity presented itself for Mr. Shen to acquire the local BMW dealership on Guam in 1991. He worked diligently to pull the company out of financial distress and has turned Prestige Automobiles into a strong and profitable small enterprise. In a time when Guam is experiencing the effects of 20 percent unemployment, Mr. Shen serves as an example of how hard work, innovation, and commitment to small enterprise can overcome serious obstacles.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SBA, let us not forget our responsibilities as legislators to create an environment where people like Mr. Shen can, with hard work, realize his dreams. Let us reaffirm our commitment in assisting our Nation's entrepreneurs so that they may too live the great American Dream.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thought there could not be a better matching of two legislative initiatives that we have had the opportunity to speak on today, and that is

the 40th anniversary of the March on Washington and the honoring and recognition of the anniversary, the 50th anniversary of the Small Business Administration, and particularly recognizing Small Business Week.

I first want to acknowledge the work of the Committee on Small Business of this House and to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman MANZULLO) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for the cooperative, singular spirit that they have on the issue of improving and promoting small businesses in the United States of America. Clearly, I believe, their very cooperative work has been an example of the very fine committee work that all of us admire, and that is, the purpose is to ensure that our small businesses are successful and they work very effectively, both the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and his emphasis on buying American and, as well, the insight he has given to the idea of the loss of manufacturing jobs and the need to restore them. And the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) has been enormously effective in ensuring that all government agencies and all contracts between the United States and the private sector have as a component small businesses, women-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses. I collectively thank both of them for their effort and this tribute and this anniversary should be a reflection on their good works.

I do want to also acknowledge the good works of our Small Business Administration regional centers all over the Nation by tribute to all of them who take a special opportunity to work with and to help our small businesses. Likewise, I would say that it is very important to note the regional director, Milton Wilson, who heads the office in Houston, Texas.

The reason why I believe that the tribute to the Small Business Administration's 50th year anniversary and the March on Washington have a lot in common is because there is work undone. I pay tribute to those who were brave enough to go to Washington in 1963 to lead not just the 250,000 plus, but to lead the Nation for a more equal and just community. A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, James Farmer, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), and Martin Luther King understood that unless we lifted all boats, no boats would be lifted. They promoted equality and justice among all, irrespective of religion and race.

The Small Business Administration promotes small business, recognizing that they are in fact the backbone of America, including small businesses, minority-owned businesses, and women-owned businesses. I believe that we have a lot of work undone, Mr. Speaker. We need to provide more tax incentives for small businesses, and certainly we must consider the fact

that they need to have more training and opportunity to work with the government.

Finally, I would say there is no doubt that as it relates to the cause of civil rights, there is much work to be done; and I hope this Congress will rise to the occasion and ensure that there are equal rights for all. My congratulations to the Small Business Administration and to the brave souls who marched on Washington in 1963.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the author of this resolution and also staffer Patrick Wilson for taking the lead on today's resolution.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, for the past 40 years the President has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of Small Business Week. This year National Small Business Week runs from September 15th through the 20th. Since the founding of our country, small businesses have contributed immeasurably to our progress and economic strength.

Let us celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit in America during National Small Business Week. The approximately 23 million small businesses in the United States employ more than half of the country's private work force, create three of every four new jobs, and generate most of America's innovations. Small businesses are the backbone of this country and they are an enduring symbol of the American Dream.

For example, five years ago a young couple in my district had a dream to open a grocery store in the City of Whittier, California. Their vision for the store was to specialize in fresh, ready to prepare Hispanic foods in the historic district of Whittier. Country Fresh Market has found a niche in the grocery retail market that has posted double-digit gains from last year. Subsequently, on March 27th Country Fresh Market was featured on the Food Network in a nationally broadcast segment of "Food Finds," hosted by Sandra Pinkney.

Country Fresh Market is a business success story, and they make many contributions to their local community, including the local Boys and Girls Club and YMCA's Annual Pancake Breakfast. Since its inception, Country Fresh Market has also had four employees graduate from college and helped many of its employees purchase homes. Country Fresh Market prides itself in its employees' success, because its employees are its "familia" (family).

Country Fresh Market is a true business success in my district. As a member of the small business community, I'm working to increase the SBA's microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000. By helping small businesses gain access to capital, I hope to bolster the number of small businesses that succeed each year.

Today, let us honor small businesses, like Country Fresh Market. By celebrating America's small businesses, we are keeping the American Dream alive and well for today, and for future generations.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Small Business Week, and the Small Business Administration is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. I would like to

congratulate the Small Business Administration, its employees and all of its resource partners on this truly momentous occasion.

Created by the passage of the Small Business Act in 1953 during the Eisenhower administration, the SBA was charged to "aid, counsel, assist and protect" the interest of small businesses in this nation.

Mr. Speaker, the SBA has made tremendous strides following its original mandate over the past half century. According to the agency, nearly 20 million small firms have received either direct or indirect assistance over the past fifty years.

Small businesses are the engine that drives our nation's economy, generating over half of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the SBA plays a key part in ensuring the engine remains strong and viable, especially in tough economic times.

There are currently about 23 million small businesses in the United States, which represents 99.7 percent of all private sector employers. Small businesses also generate 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually.

American small businesses are extremely diverse. Women owned small businesses generated \$819 billion in revenues, and employed more than 7 million workers in 1997, the last year such data is available. In that same year, 5.8 percent of small businesses were owned by Hispanic Americans, 4.4 percent by Asian Americans, and 4 percent by African Americans.

Small businesses also made up 97 percent of all identified exporters and produced 29 percent of the known export value in fiscal year 2001.

As the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Tax, Finance and Exports, I am especially proud of the agency and its tireless efforts to help all small businesses.

Two weeks ago, I held a field hearing in my District, Long Beach, California, where a very distinguished group of panelists discussed the importance of small businesses to not only southern California but to the nation as well.

I was pleased to learn during the course of that hearing that the SBA Los Angeles District Office is the number one business lending office in the United States. Over the past three years, the office has provided \$128 million in financing to 381 businesses in my home District.

I am sure that there are many more success stories nationwide about the hard work the SBA does on behalf of our nation's entrepreneurs, and I am sure that the SBA will be helping small businesses in their efforts to keep our economy strong for years to come.

Congratulations on 50 years of service to our small businesses.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 368.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.